

(19) World Intellectual Property
Organization
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date
9 June 2005 (09.06.2005)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 2005/052835 A1

(51) International Patent Classification⁷: **G06F 17/60**

(21) International Application Number:
PCT/US2004/038096

(22) International Filing Date:
15 November 2004 (15.11.2004)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:
60/524,348 20 November 2003 (20.11.2003) US
10/749,736 30 December 2003 (30.12.2003) US

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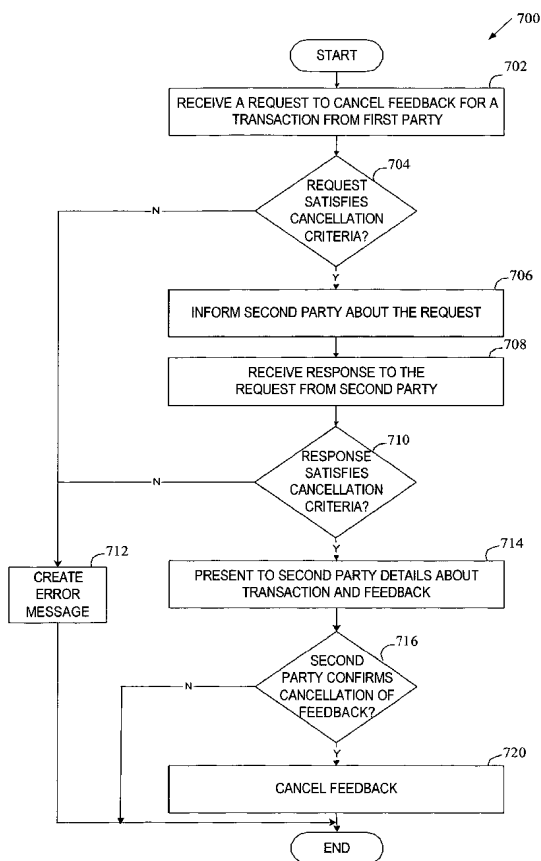
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(81) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NA, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PG, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SY, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW.

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(54) Title: **FEEDBACK CANCELLATION SYSTEM**



(57) Abstract: A method and apparatus for canceling feedback in a network-based transaction facility are described. In one embodiment, the method includes receiving a request to cancel feedback pertaining to a transaction in a network-based transaction facility from a first party to the transaction (702), determining whether feedback request satisfied the cancellation criteria (704), inform the second party to the transaction about the request (706), receive response to the request from the second party (708) where the response from the second party satisfies the cancellation criteria (710), present to the second party details about the transaction and feedback (714) and receive confirmation from the second party to cancel the feedback (716), and cancel the feedback (720).

WO 2005/052835 A1



(84) Designated States (*unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of regional protection available*): ARIPO (BW, GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, NA, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LU, MC, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

Published:

— *with international search report*

FEEDBACK CANCELLATION SYSTEM

RELATED APPLICATION

This application is related to and claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional
5 Patent application serial number 60/524,348 filed November 20, 2003, and U.S.
Patent application serial number 10/749,736 filed December 30, 2003, which are
hereby incorporated by reference.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present application relates generally to a feedback cancellation
10 system.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

In addition to access convenience, one of the advantages offered by
network-based transaction facilities (e.g., business-to-business, business-to-
consumer and consumer-to-consumer Internet marketplaces and retailers) and
15 on-line communities is that participants within such facilities or communities
may provide feedback to the facility, to other users of the facility and to
members of an on-line community regarding any number of topics.

For users of a network-based transaction facility, such as an Internet-
based auction facility, feedback regarding other users is particularly important
20 for enhancing user trust of the transaction facility. Indeed, a history of positive
feedback for a trader that routinely uses an Internet-based auction facility may be
particularly valuable and useful in providing other traders with a degree of
confidence regarding a specific trader. Accordingly, a positive feedback history
may establish the credibility and trustworthiness of a particular trader within an
25 on-line trading community. Similarly, a history of negative feedback may
discourage other traders from transacting with a specific trader.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

An exemplary method includes receiving a request to cancel feedback
pertaining to a transaction in a network-based transaction facility from a first
30 party to the transaction, determining whether feedback cancellation criteria are

satisfied, and canceling the feedback pertaining to the transaction if the feedback cancellation criteria are satisfied.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The present invention is illustrated by way of example and not limitation
5 in the figures of the accompanying drawings, in which like references indicate similar elements and in which:

Figure 1 is a block diagram illustrating an exemplary network-based transaction facility in the form of an internet-based auction facility.

Figure 2 is a database diagram illustrating an exemplary database for the
10 transaction facility.

Figure 3 is a diagrammatic representation of an exemplary transaction record table of the database illustrated in **Figure 2**.

Figure 4 is a diagrammatic representation of an exemplary feedback table of the database illustrated in **Figure 2**.

Figure 5 is a diagrammatic representation of an exemplary feedback
15 details table of the database illustrated in **Figure 2**.

Figure 6 is a block diagram of one embodiment of a feedback cancellation module.

Figures 7-9 are flow diagrams of exemplary methods performed by the
20 feedback cancellation module.

Figures 10 - 24 illustrate exemplary user interfaces.

Figure 25 is a block diagram of an exemplary computer system that may used to practice embodiments of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

25 A method and system for canceling feedback in a network-based transaction facility are described. In the following description, for purposes of explanation, numerous specific details are set forth in order to provide a thorough understanding of the present invention. It will be evident, however, to one skilled in the art that the present invention may be practiced without these
30 specific details.

Terminology

For the purposes of the present specification, the term "transaction" shall be taken to include any communications between two or more entities and shall be construed to include, but not be limited to, commercial transactions including sale and purchase transactions, auctions and the like.

Transaction Facility

Figure 1 is block diagram illustrating an exemplary network-based transaction facility 10 that includes one or more of a number of types of front-end servers, namely page servers 12 that deliver web pages (e.g., markup language documents), picture servers 14 that dynamically deliver images to be displayed within Web pages, listing servers 16, CGI servers 18 that provide an intelligent interface to the back-end of facility 10, and search servers 20 that handle search requests to the facility 10. E-mail servers 21 provide, *inter alia*, automated e-mail communications to users of the facility 10.

The back-end servers include a database engine server 22, a search index server 24 and a credit card database server 26, each of which maintains and facilitates access to a respective database.

The facility 10 may be accessed by a client program 30, such as a browser (e.g., the Internet Explorer distributed by Microsoft Corp. of Redmond, Washington) that executes on a client machine 32 and accesses the facility 10 via a network such as, for example, the Internet 34. Other examples of networks that a client may utilize to access the auction facility 10 include a wide area network (WAN), a local area network (LAN), a wireless network (e.g., a cellular network), or the Plain Old Telephone Service (POTS) network.

Database Structure

Figure 2 is a database diagram illustrating an exemplary database 23, maintained by and accessed via the database engine server 22, which at least partially implements and supports the network-based transaction facility 10 such as an Internet-based auction facility. It should be noted that while some embodiments of the present invention are described in the context of an auction facility, it will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that the invention will

find application in many different types of computer-based, and network-based, commerce facilities.

The database 23 may, in one embodiment, be implemented as a relational database, and includes a number of tables having entries, or records, that are
5 linked by indices and keys. In an alternative embodiment, the database 23 may be implemented as collection of objects in an object-oriented database.

Central to the database 23 is a user table 40, which contains a record for each user of the network-based transaction facility 10 such as an Internet-based auction facility. A user may operate as a seller, buyer, or both, within the
10 facility 10. The database 23 also includes item tables 42 that may be linked to the user table 40. Specifically, the tables 42 include a seller items table 44 and a bidder items table 46. A user record in the user table 40 may be linked to multiple items that are being, or have been, auctioned via the facility 10. A link indicates whether the user is a seller or a buyer with respect to items for which
15 records exist within the item tables 42. The database 23 also includes a note table 48 populated with note records that may be linked to one or more item records within the item tables 42 and/or to one or more user records within the user table 40. Each note record within the table 48 may include, *inter alia*, a comment, description, history or other information pertaining to an item being
20 offered via the facility 10, or to a user of the facility 10.

A number of other tables are also shown to be linked to the user table 40, namely a user past aliases table 50, a feedback table 52, a feedback details table 53, a bids table 54, an accounts table 56, an account balances table 58 and a transaction record table 60.

25 **Figure 3** is a diagrammatic representation of an exemplary embodiment of the transaction record table 60 that is populated with records, or entries, for completed, or ended, transactions (e.g., auctions) that have been facilitated by the facility 10. The table 60 includes a transaction identifier column 62 that stores a unique transaction identifier for each entry, and an end date column 64
30 that stores a date value indicating, for example, a date on which a transaction was established. A bidder column 66 stores a user identifier for a bidder (or a

purchaser), the user identifier comprising a pointer to further user information stored in the user table 40. Similarly, a seller column 68 stores, for each entry, a user identifier for a seller within the relevant transaction. An item number column 70 stores, for each entry, an item number identifying the goods or service being transacted, and a title column 72 stores, for each entry, a descriptive title for the relevant transaction or for the item being transacted. A feedback column 73 stores, for each entry, data specifying whether feedback exists for the relevant transaction and whether this feedback is current (i.e., has not been cancelled).

It should be noted that, in one embodiment, an entry is only created in the transaction record table 60 for transactions that have been established, for example, by the conclusion of an auction process, or by some other offer and acceptance mechanism between the purchaser and the seller.

Figure 4 is a diagrammatic representation of an exemplary embodiment of the feedback table 52. The feedback table 52 stores summary information regarding feedback for users of the facility 10. The table 52 includes a user identifier column 74 that stores, for each entry, a user identifier providing a pointer to the user table 40. A total score column 76 stores, for each user entry, a feedback score calculated by subtracting the total number of negative feedback comments received for the relevant user from the total number of positive feedback comments received for that user. A total negative column 78 stores, for each user entry, the total number of negative feedback comments for the relevant user, and a total positive column 80 similarly stores, for each user entry, the total number of positive feedback comments received for that user. A number of retractions column 82 stores, for each user entry, the number of bids that the relevant user has retracted from auctions.

Figure 5 is a diagrammatic representation of one embodiment of the feedback details table 53, which is populated with entries reflecting the details of each feedback comment or opinion submitted by a user to the facility 10 regarding another user or item involved in a transaction. In one exemplary embodiment, users are only permitted to provide feedback pertaining to a

transaction upon conclusion of that transaction. The feedback information may pertain to the other user that participated in the transaction, or to the object (e.g., goods or services) that was the subject of the transaction. In an alternative embodiment, comments or opinions are provided regarding an item or service that is offered for sale or regarding an event. In these cases it will be appreciated that a transaction is necessarily required for feedback to be permitted.

The feedback details table 53 includes an item number column 104 including an item identifier that points to a record within the item tables 42. A comment column 106 stores, for each entry, the actual text of the feedback, comment, or opinion. A type column 108, in one embodiment, stores indication as to whether the comment is positive, negative, neutral, or withdrawn. A date column 110 stores, for each entry, the date on which the feedback, comment or opinion was delivered. A response column 112 stores the text of a response submitted by a user (e.g., a user to which the original comment pertained) in response to the comment text stored in column 106. Similarly, a rebuttal column 114 stores the text of a rebuttal to such a response.

A feedback provider column 116 stores the user identifier of the user that submitted the original comment, stored in column 106, for the entry. A commentee column 118 stores the user identifier of the user to which comment may have been directed.

The feedback details table 53 also includes a withdrawal date column 120 that stores, for each withdrawn feedback comment, the date on which this feedback comment was withdrawn.

It will be appreciated that further dates and other descriptive information may also populate the feedback details table 53.

Feedback Cancellation

Users of the network-based transaction facility 10 are allowed to leave feedback for other users. Feedback provides users of the transaction facility 10 with a degree of confidence regarding a specific user. That is, a positive feedback history may establish the credibility and trustworthiness of a particular user within the transaction facility 10. Similarly, a history of negative feedback

may discourage other users from transacting with a specific user. Sometimes, feedback left for a user may not be accurate. For example, a feedback provider may leave a positive feedback by mistake (e.g., a buyer may leave negative feedback to a wrong seller) or the parties to a transaction may have been able to
5 resolve the problem after negative feedback was left. Embodiments of the present invention provide a mechanism for canceling feedback in the transaction facility 10.

In one embodiment, the transaction facility 10 contains a feedback cancellation module that is responsible for canceling feedback comments
10 previously left by users of the transaction facility 10. **Figure 6** is a block diagram of one embodiment of a feedback cancellation module 600.

Referring to **Figure 6**, the feedback cancellation module 600 includes a feedback cancellation request receiver 602, a feedback cancellation criteria evaluator 604, a feedback cancellation recorder 608, a feedback user interface
15 (UI) generator 612, and a database 610. The feedback cancellation request receiver 602 is responsible for receiving a request to cancel feedback from a first user, identifying a transaction associated with the feedback and identifying a second user who was the second party to the transaction. The feedback to be cancelled may include feedback comments left by the first and second users for
20 the relevant transaction. In one embodiment, the transaction is identified using an item number specified by the first user when submitting the request.

The feedback cancellation criteria evaluator 604 is responsible for evaluating information pertaining to the current feedback cancellation request based on a set of feedback cancellation criteria that encompass various rules for
25 canceling feedback in the transaction facility 10. The rules may require, for example, that at least one feedback comment be associated with the relevant transaction, that the request to cancel feedback be received before an expiration date of the transaction, that each party to the transaction be currently registered with the transaction facility 10, that the feedback cancellation request be below a

threshold number of allowed feedback cancellations for each party to the transaction, etc. In one embodiment, the rules require that at least one party agree to cancel feedback.

In another embodiment, the rules require that both parties agree to cancel feedback. In this embodiment, the feedback cancellation module 600 also includes a feedback cancellation request processor 606 that is responsible for determining whether the second party agrees to cancel feedback for the relevant transaction. In one embodiment, this determination is made by notifying the second party about the request, presenting to the second party information identifying the relevant transaction and feedback left for this transaction, and receiving a confirmation of feedback cancellation from the second party.

The feedback cancellation recorder 608 is responsible for canceling the feedback if the feedback cancellation criteria are satisfied. In one embodiment, the feedback cancellation recorder 608 cancels the feedback by marking each relevant feedback comment as withdrawn (e.g., by recording the withdrawal date in the feedback details table 53), updating feedback scores (e.g., total score 76, total negative 78 and total positive 80 in the feedback table 52), and marking the transaction as having withdrawn feedback (e.g., in the feedback column 73 of the transaction record table 60).

The feedback UI generator 612 is responsible for generating various UIs that present feedback information to the users. In one embodiment, when a user requests to see all feedback left for some other user, cancelled feedback (if any) is displayed with a comment indicating that this feedback has been withdrawn.

Figure 7 is a flow diagram of one embodiment of method 700 for canceling feedback in a network-based transaction facility. The method may be performed by the feedback cancellation module 600, which may be implemented in hardware, software, or a combination of both.

Referring to **Figure 7**, method 700 begins with the feedback cancellation request receiver 602 receiving a request to cancel feedback from a first user (processing block 702). In one embodiment, the request includes an item identifier that links the request to a specific transaction. In addition, the

feedback cancellation request receiver 602 may use the item number to determine the other party to the transaction and to retrieve all feedback comments provided for this transaction. These feedback comments may be left by the first party and/or the second party.

5 At processing block 704, the feedback cancellation criteria evaluator 604 determines whether the feedback cancellation request of the first party satisfies a set of feedback cancellation criteria. As discussed above, the set of feedback cancellation criteria are based on rules that may require, for example, that at least one feedback comment be associated with the relevant transaction, that the
10 request to cancel feedback be received before an expiration date of the transaction, that each party to the transaction be currently registered with the transaction facility 10, that the feedback cancellation request be below a threshold number of allowed feedback cancellations for each party to the transaction, etc.

15 If the feedback cancellation request of the first party does not satisfy any of the feedback cancellation criteria, the criteria evaluator 604 creates an error message identifying the problem (processing block 712). If the feedback cancellation request of the first party satisfies all of the feedback cancellation criteria, the feedback cancellation request processor 606 informs the second
20 party of the feedback cancellation request (processing block 706). In one embodiment, the feedback cancellation request processor 606 sends to the second party an email specifying the request and identifying the relevant transaction and feedback left for this transaction. The email may also include a link to a feedback cancellation form that the second party needs to access in
25 order to proceed with the request. In other embodiments, the second party may be notified about the request of the first party using different communication means (e.g., a letter, a voice message, etc.).

 At processing block 708, the feedback cancellation request processor 606 receives from the second party a response to the feedback cancellation request.
30 In one embodiment, the response includes an item number that links the

response to the feedback cancellation request of the first party, and a request of the second party to view detailed information about the relevant transaction.

At processing block 710, the feedback cancellation criteria evaluator 604 determines whether the response of the first party satisfies the feedback
5 cancellation criteria. For example, the feedback cancellation criteria evaluator 604 may determine whether the response is received before the expiration date of the transaction, that each party to the transaction is currently registered with the transaction facility 10, etc.

If the response of the second party does not satisfy any of the feedback
10 cancellation criteria, the criteria evaluator 604 creates an error message identifying the problem (processing block 712). If the response of the second party satisfies all of the feedback cancellation criteria, the feedback UI generator 612 presents to the second party information about the transaction and feedback comments left for this transaction (processing block 716).

At processing block 716, the feedback cancellation request processor 606
15 determines whether the second party confirms the cancellation of the feedback based on the input provided by the second party. If not, method 700 ends. If so, the feedback cancellation request processor 606 causes the feedback cancellation recorder 608 to cancel the feedback (processing block 720). In one embodiment,
20 the feedback is cancelled by marking each relevant feedback comment as withdrawn, recalculating feedback scores and statistics of both parties, and marking the transaction as having withdrawn feedback to prevent the party who has not yet provided feedback from leaving new feedback.

In one embodiment, method 700 performed by the feedback
25 cancellation module 600 is divided into an initiator process that is based on interactions with the first party (referred to as a mutual feedback withdrawal (MFW) initiator) and a respondent process that is based on interactions with the second party (referred to as a MFW respondent). **Figure 8** is a flow diagram of one embodiment of a method 800 for performing an exemplary MFW initiator
30 process. Method 800 may be performed by the feedback cancellation module 600, which may be implemented in hardware, software, or a combination of

both. Method 800 is discussed with reference to exemplary UIs created by the feedback UI generator 612 and illustrated in **Figures 10-15B**.

Referring to **Figure 8**, method 800 begins with the feedback UI generator 612 presenting an initial MFW UI to the first party (processing block 802). An
 5 exemplary initial MFW UI is shown in **Figure 10**.

At processing block 804, the feedback cancellation request receiver 602 receives an item number provided by the first party via the initial MFW UI and attempts to identify the transaction and the second party to the transaction based on the item number. If the item number is associated with multiple transactions
 10 and multiple second parties (e.g., the first party is a seller who has multiple buyers of the same item), the feedback cancellation request receiver 602 determines that further identification of the transaction is required and retrieves information pertaining to the multiple transactions from the database 610. Alternatively, if the item number is associated with a single transaction, the
 15 feedback cancellation request receiver 602 retrieves information about this transaction from the database 610.

At processing block 806, the criteria evaluator 604 determines whether the feedback withdrawal criteria are satisfied. **Table 1** illustrates exemplary feedback withdrawal criteria used by the criteria evaluator 604.

20

Order	Criteria	Condition	Error Message
1	Was an item number entered?	Return error if FALSE	Please enter a valid item number.
2	Is the user signed in and not suspended?	Require sign-in	
3	Is this a valid item number?	Return error if FALSE	Please enter a valid item number.
4	Did the user participate in this transaction?	Return error if FALSE	You are not involved in this transaction.
5	Does a specific transaction need to be identified? (multi-transaction)	Skip to multi-transaction logic	
6	Has feedback already been withdrawn for this transaction?	Return error if TRUE	Feedback for this transaction has already been withdrawn.
6a	Did either party leave feedback for this transaction?	Return error if FALSE	At least one trading partner must leave feedback for this transaction before it can be withdrawn.

7	Less than 90 days since txn end or less than 30 days since either party feedback left for this transaction? (does not include reply or follow-ups)	Return error if FALSE	This transaction is past the expiry date for a feedback withdrawal request.
8	Is the other party in transaction NARU?	Return error if TRUE	The request cannot be completed as the other party in this transaction is no longer a registered user.
9	MFW request already filed for this transaction?	Return error if TRUE	You have already requested feedback withdrawal for this transaction.
10	Is this user over their usage limit?	Return error if TRUE	You can request withdrawal for only 15 transactions during a 30-day period.
11	Has the other party already filed for MFW on this item?	User sees respondent flow if TRUE.	

Table 1.

If any of the feedback withdrawal criteria are not satisfied, the feedback
 5 UI generator 612 displays an error messages (processing block 816). Examples
 of error messages are included in **Table 1**. **Figures 11A and 11B** illustrate
 exemplary UIs that present error messages to the user.

If all of the feedback withdrawal criteria are satisfied and the item
 number is associated with multiple transactions (processing block 808), the
 10 feedback UI generator 612 presents to the first party a multi-item MFW UI
 containing a list of transactions. **Figure 12** illustrates an exemplary multi-item
 MFW UI that facilitates user selection of a specific transaction.

Upon receiving an identifier of the second party (the respondent)
 (processing block 812), the criteria evaluator 604 determines whether the
 15 feedback withdrawal criteria are satisfied (processing block 814). **Table 2**
 illustrates exemplary feedback withdrawal criteria used by the criteria evaluator
 604 for the multi-transaction items.

Order	Criteria	Condition	Error Message
1M	Was a transaction selected?	Return error if FALSE	Please select a transaction.
2M	Is the user signed in and not suspended?	Require sign-in	
6M	Has feedback already been withdrawn for this transaction?	Return error if TRUE	Feedback for this transaction has already been withdrawn.
6MA	Did either party leave feedback for this transaction?	Return error if FALSE	At least one trading partner must leave feedback for this transaction before it can be withdrawn.
7M	Less than 90 days since txn end or less than 30 days since either party feedback left for this transaction? (does not include reply or follow-ups)	Return error if FALSE	This transaction is past the expiry date for a feedback withdrawal request.
8M	Is the other party in transaction NARU?	Return error if TRUE	The request cannot be completed as the other party in this transaction is no longer a registered user.
9M	MFW request already filed for this transaction?	Return error if TRUE	You have already requested feedback withdrawal for this transaction.
10M	Is this user over their usage limit?	Return error if TRUE	You can request withdrawal for only 15 transactions during a 30-day period.
11M	Has the other party already filed for MFW on this item?	User sees respondent flow if TRUE.	

Table 2.

If any of the feedback withdrawal criteria are not satisfied, the feedback UI generator 612 displays an error messages (processing block 816). If all of the feedback withdrawal criteria for the multi-transaction items are satisfied or the item is associated with a single transaction (processing block 808), the feedback UI generator 612 presents to the first party an initiator review MFW UI that provides information about the transaction and feedback left for this transaction (processing block 818). **Figure 13A** illustrates an exemplary initiator review MFW UI.

In one embodiment, if the first and second parties have multiple transactions for the same item, the feedback for each of those transactions is to be withdrawn at the same time and information for each of those transactions is included in the initiator review MFW UI as illustrated in **Figure 13B**.

If the first party decides to proceed further with feedback cancellation, the feedback UI generator 612 presents to the first party a MFW policy UI that provides information about feedback cancellation rules in the transaction facility 10 (processing block 820). **Figure 14** illustrates an exemplary MFW policy UI.

5 If the first party confirms the request to cancel feedback (processing block 822), the feedback cancellation request processor 606 sends emails to the first party confirming the request and to second party notifying about the request. **Figures 21 and 22** illustrate exemplary emails sent to the first and second parties respectively.

10 In addition, the feedback UI generator 612 presents a MFW request confirmation UI to the first party (processing block 828). **Figure 15A** illustrates an exemplary MFW request confirmation UI.

If the first party does not confirm the request to cancel feedback (processing block 822), the feedback UI generator 612 presents a MFW request cancellation UI to the first party (processing block 828). **Figure 15B** illustrates an exemplary MFW request cancellation UI.

Figure 9 is a flow diagram of one embodiment of a method 900 for performing an exemplary MFW respondent process. Method 900 may be performed by the feedback cancellation module 600, which may be implemented in hardware, software, or a combination of both. Method 900 is discussed with reference to exemplary UIs created by the feedback UI generator 612 and illustrated in **Figures 16-20**.

Referring to **Figure 9**, method 900 begins with the feedback UI generator 612 presenting an initial respondent MFW UI to the second party (processing block 902). An exemplary initial respondent MFW UI is shown in **Figure 16**. If the second party accesses the initial respondent MFW UI via email, the item number is included in the UI as illustrated in **Figure 16**. Alternatively, the second party is requested to enter the item number.

When the second party asks for details of the relevant transaction (processing block 904), the criteria evaluator 604 determines whether the feedback withdrawal criteria are satisfied (processing block 906). Exemplary

feedback withdrawal criteria used by the criteria evaluator 604 are illustrated in **Table 1**.

If any of the feedback withdrawal criteria are not satisfied, the feedback UI generator 612 displays an error messages (processing block 913). Examples
5 of error messages are included in **Table 1**. **Figure 17** illustrates an exemplary UI that presents an error message to the user.

If all of the feedback withdrawal criteria are satisfied and the item number is associated with multiple transactions (processing block 908), the feedback UI generator 612 presents to the second party a multi-item MFW UI
10 containing a list of transactions to the first party, as illustrated in **Figure 12**.

Upon receiving an identifier of the transaction from the second party (processing block 910), the criteria evaluator 604 determines whether the feedback withdrawal criteria are satisfied (processing block 912). **Table 2**
illustrates exemplary feedback withdrawal criteria used by the criteria evaluator
15 604 for the multi-transaction items.

If any of the feedback withdrawal criteria are not satisfied, the feedback UI generator 612 displays an error messages (processing block 913). If all of the feedback withdrawal criteria for the multi-transaction items are satisfied or the item is associated with a single transaction (processing block 908), the feedback
20 UI generator 612 presents to the second party a respondent review MFW UI that provides information about the transaction and feedback left for this transaction (processing block 914). **Figure 18** illustrates an exemplary respondent review MFW UI.

If the second party decides to proceed further with feedback cancellation,
25 the feedback UI generator 612 presents to the second party a MFW policy UI that provides information about feedback cancellation rules in the transaction facility 10 as illustrated in **Figure 14**.

If the second party does not confirm the request to cancel feedback (processing block 918), the feedback UI generator 612 presents a MFW request
30 cancellation UI to the second party (processing block 920). **Figure 20** illustrates an exemplary MFW request cancellation UI.

If the second party confirms the withdrawal of feedback (processing block 918), the feedback cancellation request processor 606 sends an email to the first party confirming that the request has been successfully completed.

Figure 23 illustrates an exemplary email sent to the first party. In addition, the feedback UI generator 612 presents a MFW success UI to the second party (processing block 922). **Figure 19** illustrates an exemplary MFW success UI.

Afterwards, the feedback cancellation recorder 608 marks feedback left for the relevant transaction as withdrawn (processing block 924), records the withdrawal date for each relevant feedback comment (processing block 926), and re-calculates feedback scores, rating totals and recent ratings for both parties (processing block 928).

Subsequently, if any user of the transaction facility 20 requests to view feedback left either for the first or second party, the feedback UI generator 612 presents a feedback review UI that identifies withdrawn feedback comments. **Figure 24** illustrates an exemplary feedback review UI that identifies withdrawn feedback 2402, provides the number 2404 of withdrawn comments, and ratings and statistics 2406 reflecting the withdrawn comments.

Computer System

Figure 25 shows a diagrammatic representation of a machine in the exemplary form of a computer system 2500 within which a set of instructions, for causing the machine to perform any one of the methodologies discussed above, may be executed. In alternative embodiments, the machine may comprise a network router, a network switch, a network bridge, Personal Digital Assistant (PDA), a cellular telephone, a web appliance or any machine capable of executing a sequence of instructions that specify actions to be taken by that machine.

The computer system 2500 includes a processor 2502, a main memory 2504 and a static memory 2506, which communicate with each other via a bus 2508. The computer system 2500 may further include a video display unit 2510 (e.g., a liquid crystal display (LCD) or a cathode ray tube (CRT)). The computer system 2500 also includes an alpha-numeric input device 2512 (e.g. a keyboard),

a cursor control device 2514 (e.g. a mouse), a disk drive unit 2516, a signal generation device 2520 (e.g. a speaker) and a network interface device 2522.

The disk drive unit 2516 includes a machine-readable medium 2524 on which is stored a set of instructions (i.e., software) 2526 embodying any one, or
5 all, of the methodologies described above. The software 2526 is also shown to reside, completely or at least partially, within the main memory 2504 and/or within the processor 2502. The software 2526 may further be transmitted or received via the network interface device 2522. For the purposes of this specification, the term " machine-readable medium" shall be taken to include
10 any medium that is capable of storing or encoding a sequence of instructions for execution by the machine and that cause the machine to perform any one of the methodologies of the present invention. The term "machine-readable medium" shall accordingly be taken to included, but not be limited to, solid-state memories, optical and magnetic disks, and carrier wave signals.

CLAIMS

1. An apparatus characterized by:
 - a feedback cancellation request receiver to receive a request to cancel feedback pertaining to a transaction in a network-based transaction facility from
 - 5 a first party to the transaction;
 - a feedback cancellation criteria evaluator, communicately coupled to the feedback cancellation request receiver, to determine whether one or more feedback cancellation criteria are satisfied; and
 - a feedback cancellation recorder, communicately coupled to the feedback
 - 10 cancellation criteria evaluator, to cancel the feedback pertaining to the transaction if the one or more feedback cancellation criteria are satisfied.
2. The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising:
 - a feedback cancellation request processor to determine that a second
 - 15 party to the transaction agrees to cancel the feedback pertaining to the transaction.
3. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the feedback pertaining to the transaction includes at least one of a feedback comment left by the first party for
- 20 a second party to the transaction and a feedback comment left by the second party for the first party.
4. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the feedback cancellation request receiver is further to identify a second party to the transaction based on input
- 25 provided by the first party, to present to the first party information identifying the second party and the feedback pertaining to the transaction, and to receive a confirmation of the request to cancel feedback from the first party.
5. The apparatus of claim 4 wherein the input provided by the first party
- 30 includes an identifier of an item associated with the transaction.

6. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the feedback cancellation request receiver is further to notify a second party to the transaction about the request to cancel feedback.

5

7. The apparatus of claim 2 wherein the feedback cancellation request processor is to determine that the second party agrees to cancel the feedback by presenting to the second party information identifying the transaction for which the first party submitted the request to cancel feedback, and receiving a
10 confirmation of feedback cancellation from the second party.

8. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the feedback cancellation recorder is to cancel the feedback pertaining to the transaction by marking the feedback pertaining to the transaction as withdrawn, and recalculating feedback scores and
15 statistics for each of the first party and a second party to the transaction.

9. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the one or more feedback cancellation criteria includes at least one requirement selected from the group consisting of a requirement that at least one feedback comment pertaining to the transaction
20 exist, a requirement that the request to cancel feedback be received before an expiration date of the transaction, a requirement that a second party to the transaction agree to cancel feedback before an expiration date of the request to cancel feedback, a requirement that each of the first and second parties be currently registered with the network-based transaction facility, and a
25 requirement that each of the first and second parties do not exceed a feedback cancellation limit.

10. A method characterized by:
- receiving a request, as an electronic communication, to cancel feedback
pertaining to a transaction at a network-based transaction facility from a first
party to the transaction;
- 5 automatically determining whether one or more feedback cancellation
criteria are satisfied; and
- automatically canceling the feedback pertaining to the transaction if the
one or more feedback cancellation criteria are satisfied.
- 10 11. The method of claim 10 further comprising:
- determining that a second party to the transaction agrees to cancel the
feedback pertaining to the transaction.
12. The method of claim 10 wherein the feedback pertaining to the
15 transaction includes at least one of a feedback comment left by the first party for
a second party to the transaction and a feedback comment left by the second
party for the first party.
13. The method of claim 10 further comprising:
- 20 identifying a second party to the transaction based on input provided by
the first party;
- presenting to the first party information identifying the second party and
the feedback pertaining to the transaction; and
- receiving a confirmation of the request to cancel feedback from the first
25 party.
14. The method of claim 13 wherein the input provided by the first party
includes an identifier of an item associated with the transaction.

15. The method of claim 14 wherein identifying the second party comprises:

determining that the item is associated with a plurality of transactions;
presenting to the first party one or more users participating in the
5 plurality of transactions; and
requesting the first party to specify which of the one or more users is the
second party.

16. The method of claim 10 further comprising:
10 notifying a second party to the transaction about the request to cancel
feedback.

17. The method of claim 16 wherein notifying the second party comprises:
sending to the second party an email message informing the
15 second party of the request to cancel feedback pertaining to the transaction.

18. The method of claim 17 wherein the email message sent to the second
party includes a link to a feedback cancellation form.

20 19. The method of claim 11 wherein determining that the second party
agrees to cancel the feedback comprises:
presenting to the second party information identifying the transaction for
which the first party submitted the request to cancel feedback; and
receiving a confirmation of feedback cancellation from the second party.

25
20. The method of claim 10 wherein canceling the feedback pertaining to the
transaction comprises:
marking the feedback pertaining to the transaction as withdrawn; and
recalculating feedback scores and statistics for each of the first party and
30 a second party to the transaction.

21. The method of claim 10 further comprising:
upon receiving a request for feedback left for any one of the first party
and a second party to the transaction, displaying one or more feedback
comments pertaining to the transaction with a feedback withdrawal comment.

5

22. The method of claim 10 further comprising:
preventing any of the first party and a second party to the transaction
from entering feedback comments for the transaction upon canceling the
feedback pertaining to the transaction.

10

23. The method of claim 10 wherein the one or more feedback cancellation
criteria includes at least one requirement selected from the group consisting of a
requirement that at least one feedback comment pertaining to the transaction
exist, a requirement that the request to cancel feedback be received before an
expiration date of the transaction, a requirement that a second party to the
transaction agree to cancel feedback before an expiration date of the request to
cancel feedback, a requirement that each of the first and second parties be
currently registered with the network-based transaction facility, and a
requirement that each of the first and second parties do not exceed a feedback
cancellation limit.

20

24. A computer readable medium comprising instructions, which when
executed on a processor, cause the processor to perform a method characterized
by:

25

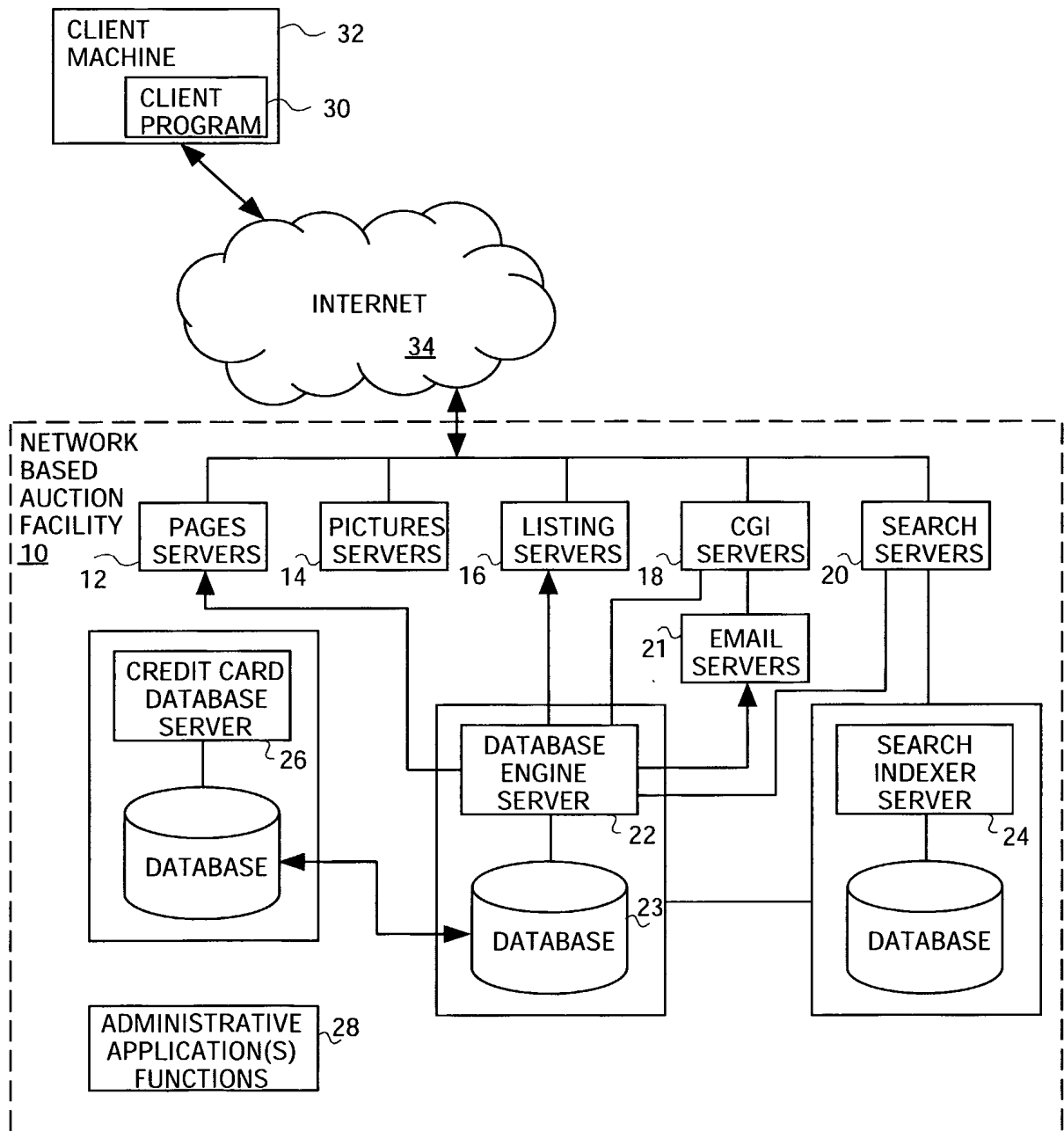
receiving a request to cancel feedback pertaining to a transaction in a
network-based transaction facility from a first party to the transaction;

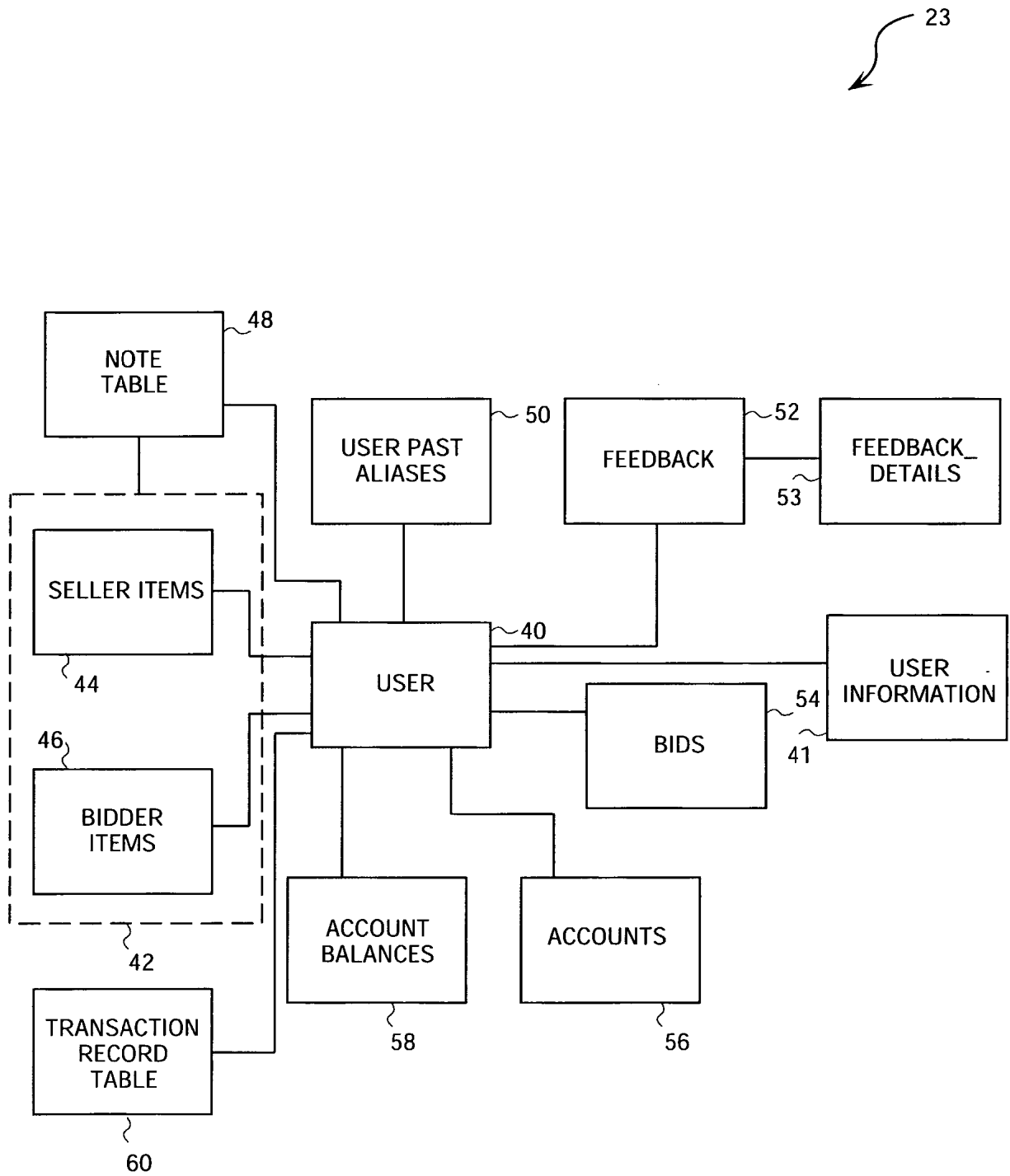
determining that a second party to the transaction agrees to cancel the
feedback pertaining to the transaction;

30

determining whether one or more feedback cancellation criteria are
satisfied; and

canceling the feedback pertaining to the transaction if the one or more feedback cancellation criteria are satisfied.

**FIG. 1**



[illegible]

FIG. 3

[illegible]

FIG. 4

FEEDBACK DETAILS								
TABLE								
ITEM NO.	COMMENT	TYPE	DATA	RESPONSE	REBUTTAL	FEEDBACK PROVIDER (USER ID)	COMMENTEE (USER ID)	WITHDRAWAL DATE
104								
106								
108								
110								
112								
114								
116								
118								
120								

FIG. 5

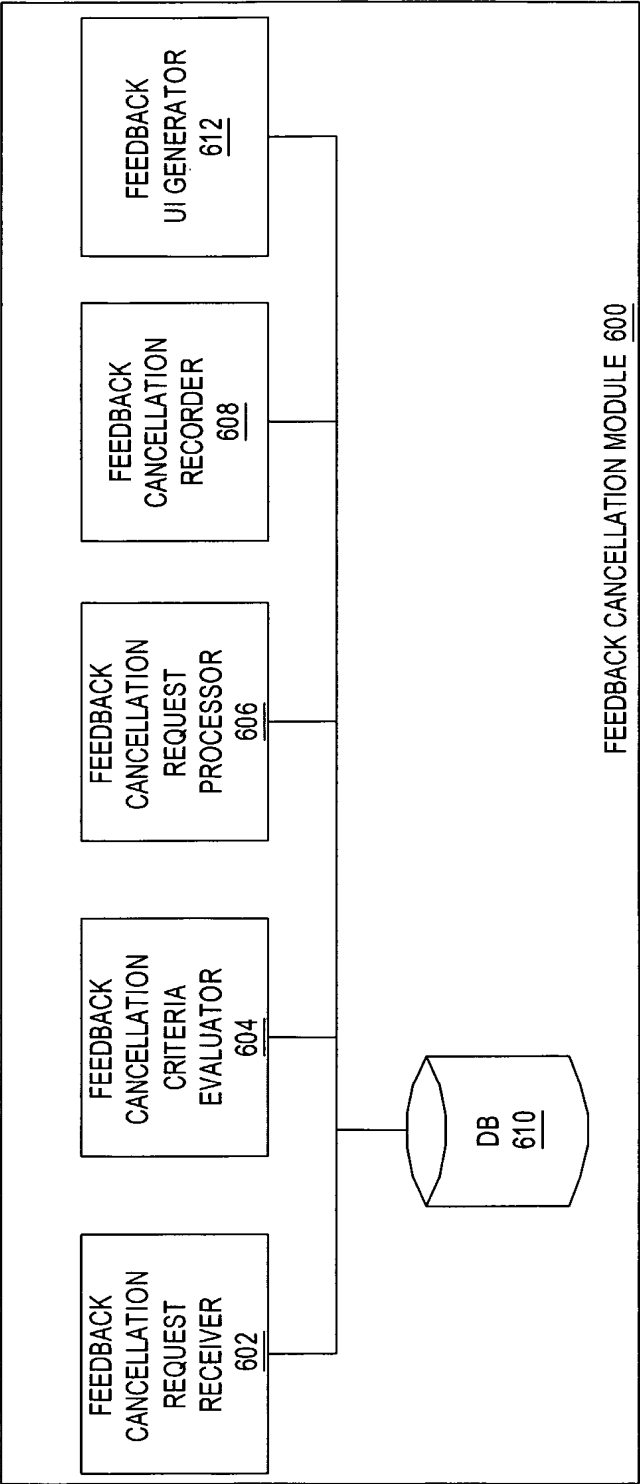
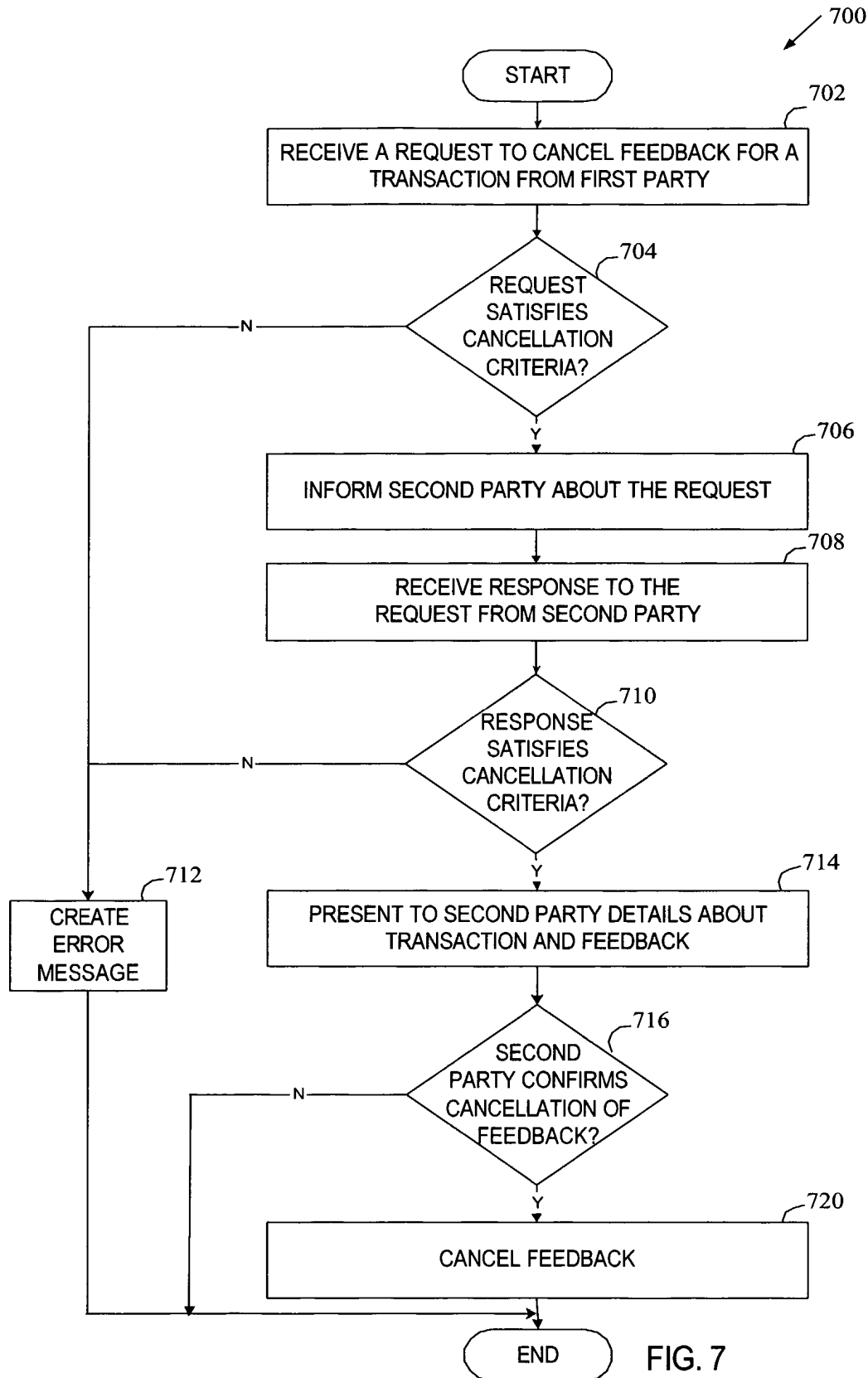
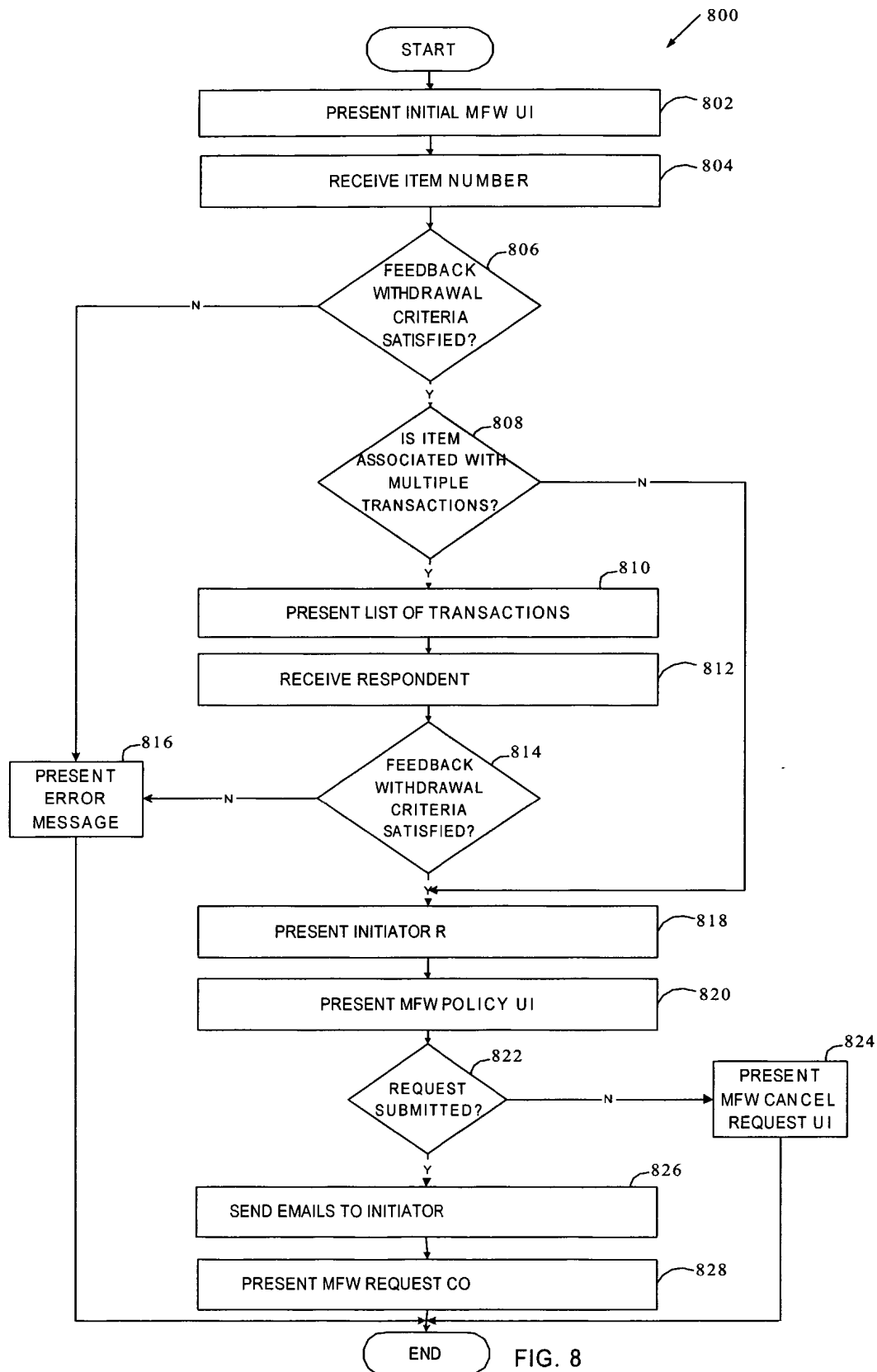
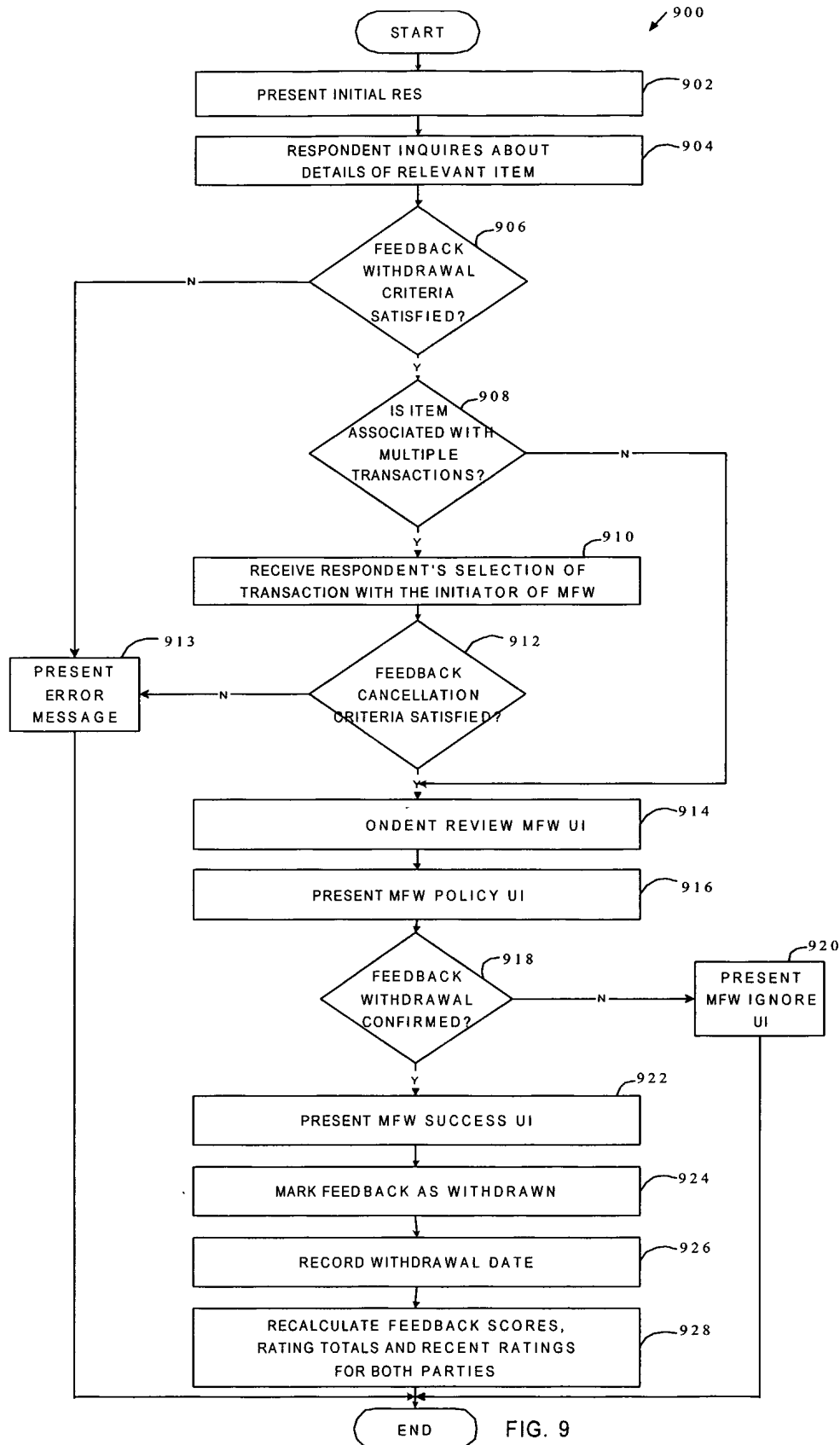


FIG. 6







home	register	sign in	services	site map	help
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Browse	Search	Sell	Community	Powered By EBAY
------------------------	------------------------	----------------------	---------------------------	------------------------

[Home](#) > [Services](#) > [Feedback Forum](#) > Mutual Feedback Withdrawal

Feedback Forum: Mutual Feedback Withdrawal [Read Help?](#)

While feedback is a permanent part of a member's reputation, ratings left for a particular transaction may be withdrawn through mutual feedback withdrawal. For this to happen, both members must agree that feedback left is no longer appropriate, and agree to withdraw using this process. Withdrawn feedback remains in both members' profiles but is no longer counted in the feedback score. [Learn more](#).

Before initiating this process, please be sure to [contact](#) the other member to resolve any disagreements.

Enter an item number:

[Continue](#)





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FIG. 10

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Feedback Forum: Mutual Feedback Withdrawal [Need Help?](#)

While feedback is a permanent part of a member's reputation, ratings left for a particular transaction may be withdrawn through mutual feedback withdrawal. For this to happen, **both members must agree that feedback left is no longer appropriate**, and agree to withdraw using this process. Withdrawn feedback remains in both members' profiles but is no longer counted in the feedback score. [Learn more](#).

Before initiating this process, please be sure to [contact](#) the other eBay member to resolve any disagreements.

 Please enter a valid item number.
Enter an item number:

[Continue](#)

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FIG. 11A

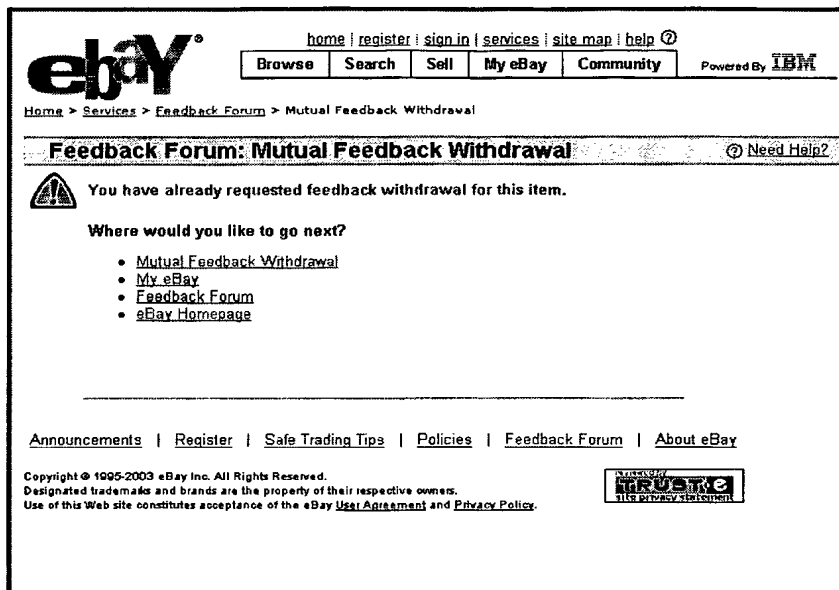



FIG. 11B

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------------------------	------------------------	----------------------	---------------------------	-----------------------

Home > Services > Feedback Forum > Mutual Feedback Withdrawal

Feedback Forum: Mutual Feedback Withdrawal [Need Help?](#)

You are about to request mutual feedback withdrawal for item: 123456789. Please select the appropriate buyer to whom you would like to send this request.

Please note: If the buyer agreeing to this request has purchased more than one item from this listing, feedback ratings for all the items will be withdrawn.

Select	User ID	Sale Date/Time	Comment you received
<input type="radio"/>	funnygirl	Sep-24-03 12:35	Never shipped the item! Bad Seller Reply left by dreamlife90: Shipment was delayed by UPS. Arrived two days later on Sep 26th.
<input type="radio"/>	usa-promotion	Sep-15-03 22:28	(No feedback has been left.)
<input type="radio"/>	photo1canada	Sep-11-03 10:33	Excellent transaction. Paid quickly... Highly recommended!! A++++
<input type="radio"/>	royalsteam	Sep-11-03 02:38	Great to do business with! Fast response.
<input type="radio"/>	johnnymanic	Sep-10-03 12:09	very fast.

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FIG. 12

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[Home](#) > [Services](#) > [Feedback Forum](#) > Mutual Feedback Withdrawal

Feedback Forum: Mutual Feedback Withdrawal [Need Help?](#)


You are about to initiate mutual feedback withdrawal for item 123456789. For the feedback to be withdrawn, [funnygirl](#) must also agree and complete the process within 90 days from the end of the listing or 30 days from the date the feedback was left.

Please review the information below before sending your request.

Buyer:	funnygirl (88 ★)
Item:	Snackery Pop Dispenser Free S&H with BIN (123456789)
Date/Time:	Sep-24-08 12:35:16 PDT
Feedback you left:	☹ Left negative feedback prematurely.
Feedback you received:	☹ Never shipped the item! Bad Seller
	Reply left by dreamlife80 : Shipment was delayed by UPS. Arrived two days later on Sep 26th.

Message to buyer:
(optional)

Up to 200 characters.

 [Cancel request](#)

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FIG. 13A




Buyer:	funnygirl (88 ★)
Item:	Snoopy Pez Dispenser Free S&H with BIN (123456789)
Date/Time:	Sep-24-03 12:35:18 PDT
Feedback you left:	(No feedback comment has been left.)
Feedback received:	 Never shipped the item! Bad Seller
Buyer:	funnygirl (88 ★)
Item:	Snoopy Pez Dispenser Free S&H with BIN (123456789)
Date/Time:	Sep-23-03 02:34:17 PDT
Feedback you left:	(No feedback comment has been left.)
Feedback received:	 Never shipped the item! Bad Seller

FIG. 13B

home register sign in services site map help ?				
Browse	Search	Sell	Community	Powered By IBM

Home > Services > Feedback Forum > Mutual Feedback Withdrawal

Feedback Forum: Mutual Feedback Withdrawal
? Need Help?

 **Important: Please read the following before continuing with your request.**

1. Both members must complete this process within 90 days from the end of the listing or 30 days from the date the feedback was left.
2. The ratings that you and the other member left will **both be withdrawn at the same time**. After withdrawal, no additional feedback will be allowed for this item.
3. Withdrawn feedback comments remain visible in both members' profiles, but are **no longer counted in the feedback score**. [See example](#).
4. eBay will review excessive requests for feedback withdrawal for compliance with our [feedback policies](#).
5. Once you submit your request, it cannot be retracted or canceled. If the other member declines the request or does not respond, the feedback will remain unchanged.

[Cancel request](#)

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FIG. 14

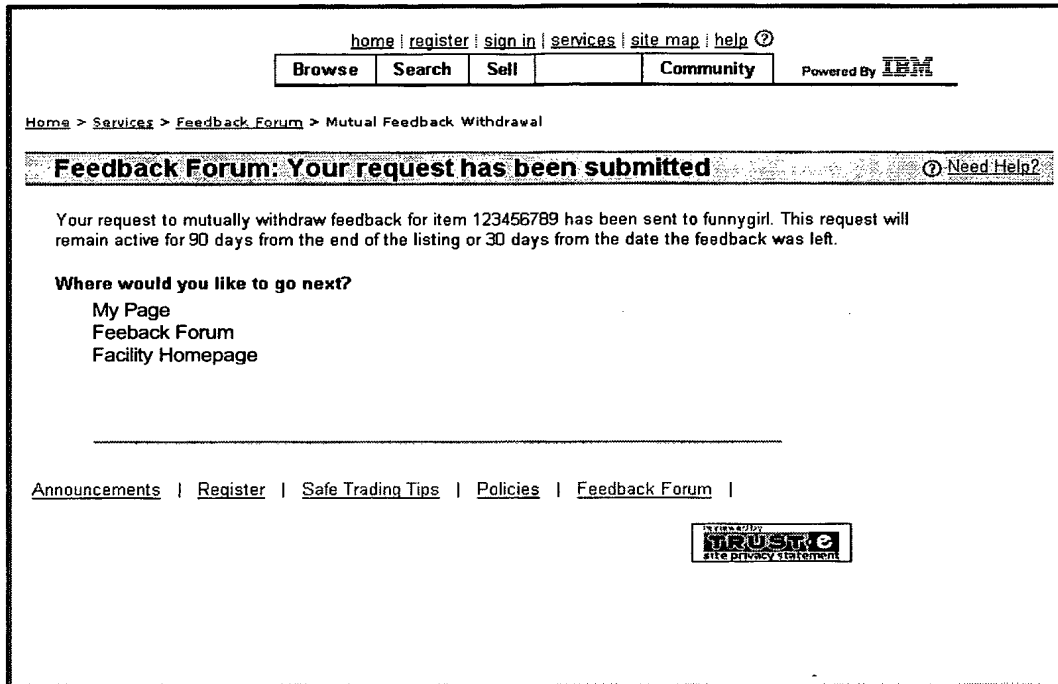


FIG. 15A

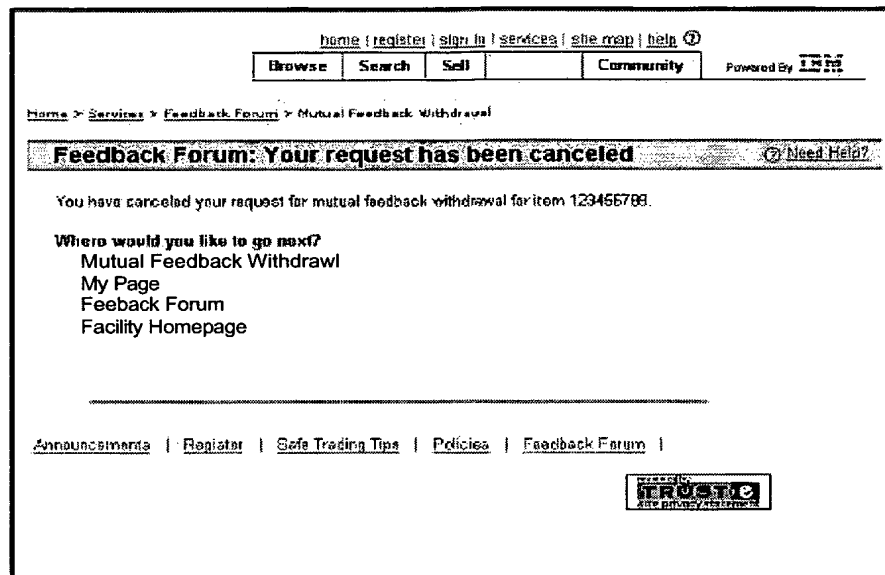



FIG. 15B

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Feedback Forum: Mutual Feedback Withdrawal [? Need Help?](#)

While feedback is a permanent part of a member's reputation, ratings left for a particular transaction may be withdrawn through mutual feedback withdrawal. For this to happen, **both members must agree that feedback left is no longer appropriate**, and agree to withdraw using this process. Withdrawn feedback remains in both members' profiles but is no longer counted in the feedback score. [Learn more](#).

Before completing this process, be sure to [contact](#) the other member to resolve any disagreements.

Your trading partner requested mutual feedback withdrawal for the following item:
123456789

[See details](#)

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is verified by

site privacy statement

FIG. 16

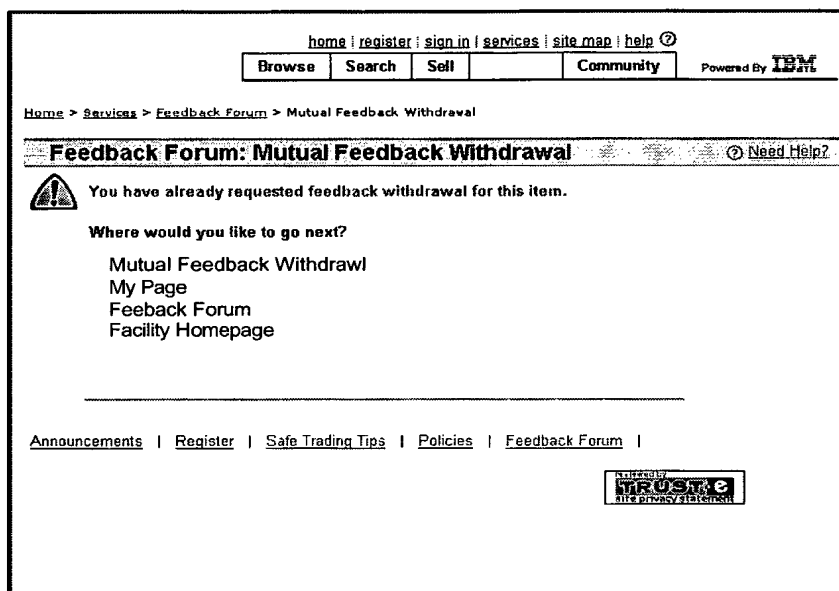


FIG. 17

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Feedback Forum: Mutual Feedback Withdrawal

Your trading partner has agreed to mutual feedback withdrawal for the following item and requested you to do the same. If you agree to this request, feedback will be withdrawn and will not count towards the feedback scores of you and your trading partner; however, the feedback comments will be visible in both members' profiles. [Learn more](#)

Please review the information below:

[Need Help?](#)

Seller:	dreamlife90 (5.7) ★
Item:	Snoopy Pez Dispenser Free S&H with BIN (123456789)
Date/Time:	Sep-24-03 12:35:18 PDT
Feedback you left:	Never shipped the item! Bad Seller Reply left by dreamlife90: Shipment was delayed by UPS. Arrived two days later on Sep 26th.
Feedback you received:	Left negative feedback prematurely.

[Ignore request](#)

[Announcements](#) | [Register](#) | [Safe Trading Tips](#) | [Policies](#) | [Feedback Forum](#)

FIG. 18

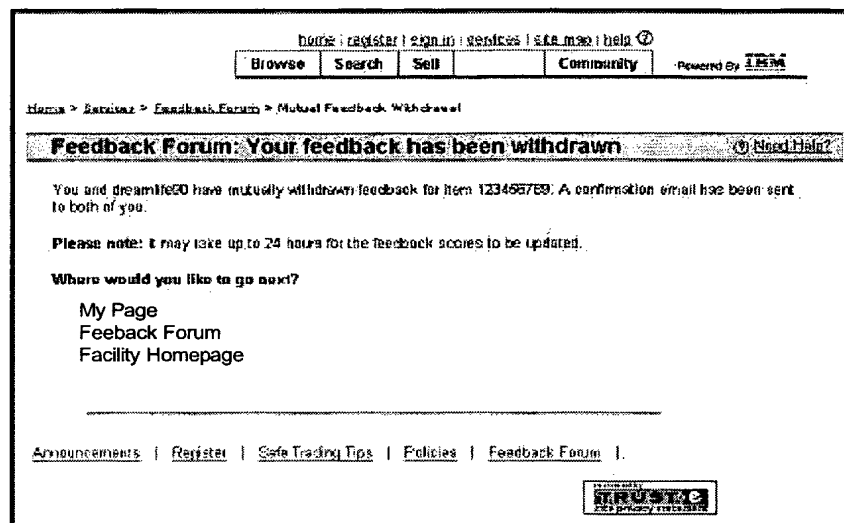


FIG. 19

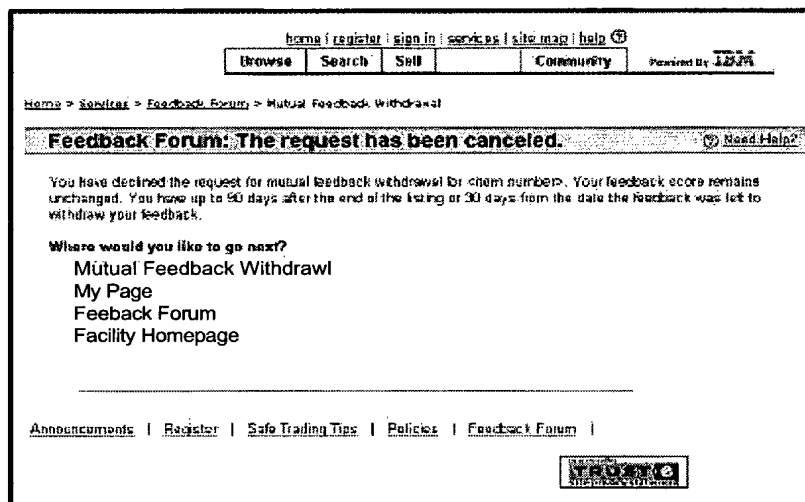


FIG. 20

Feedback Withdrawal Request for Item 123456789	
Dear dreamlife90,	
Your request to withdraw feedback for item 123456789 has been sent to member funnygirl. Your trading partner must also agree and complete this request before the feedback will be withdrawn and scores updated for both members.	
Please note: If the member does not agree or does not complete the form within 90 days of the transaction or within 30 days of the date the feedback was left, the feedback for this transaction will remain unchanged.	
Item/Feedback Information	
Buyer:	funnygirl (88 ★)
Item:	Snoopy Pez Dispenser Free S&H with BIN (123456789)
Date/Time:	Sep-24-03 12:35:18 PDT
Feedback you left:	⊖ Left negative feedback prematurely.
Feedback you received:	⊖ Never shipped the item! Bad Seller
	Reply left by dreamlife90: Shipment was delayed by UPS. Arrived two days later on Sep 26th.
Message to buyer:	Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Morbi et est sed diam volutpat congue. Suspendisse turpis urna, venenatis eu, posuere at, gravida vel, diam.

FIG. 21

Feedback Withdrawal Request for Item 123456789	
Dear funnygirl,	
dreamlife90 has filed a request to mutually withdraw feedback for the transaction shown below. allows members to withdraw feedback for a transaction if they both agree it is no longer appropriate.	
If you agree to this request, the feedback you received AND any feedback you left for this transaction will be withdrawn at the same time. Withdrawn feedback remains in both members' profiles but is no longer counted in the feedback score. If you have not left feedback for this transaction, you may still agree to this request, but you will not be able to leave feedback at a later date.	
<div> <p>If you agree, please fill out the feedback withdrawal form:</p> <p>If you disagree, no action is required. The feedback for this transaction will remain unchanged.</p> </div>	
<p>Please note: To withdraw feedback, you must complete the online form within 90 days from the end of the listing or within 30 days of the date the feedback was left, whichever is longer.</p>	
Item/Feedback Information	
Seller:	dreamlife90 (3528 ★)
Item:	Snoopy Pez Dispenser Free S&H with BIN (123456789)
Date/Time:	Sep-24-03 12:35:18 PDT
Feedback you left:	<p>☹ Never shipped the item! Bad Seller</p> <p>Reply left by dreamlife90: Shipment was delayed by UPS. Arrived two days later on Sep 26th.</p>
Feedback you received:	☹ Left negative feedback prematurely.
Message from seller:	<p>Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Morbi et est sed diam volutpat congue. Suspendisse turpis urna, venenatis eu, posuere at, gravida vel, diam.</p>

FIG. 22

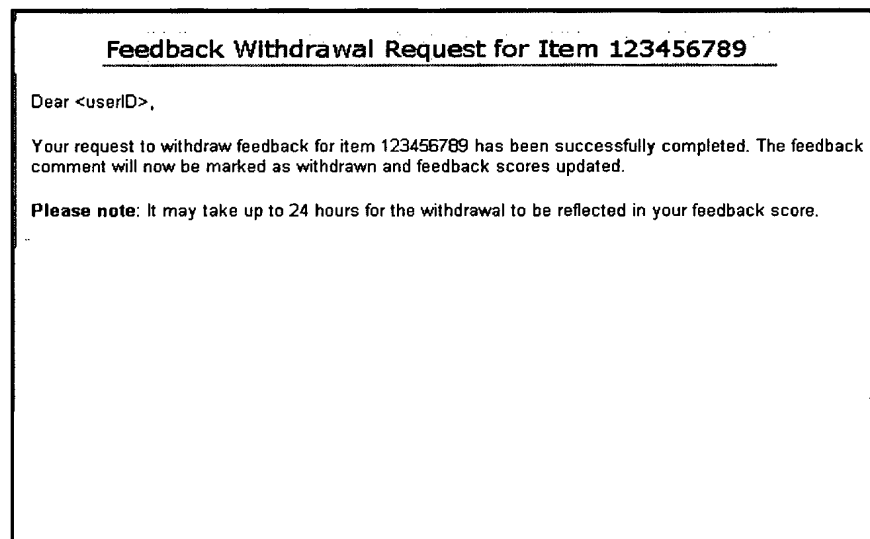


FIG. 23

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Browse Search Sell Community powered by XYZ

← Back to your last item Home > Services > Feedback Forum > Member Profile

Member Profile: dreamlife90 (3528 ★) [Seller](#) [Items](#) [Info](#)

Feedback Score: **3528** Recent Ratings:

Positive Feedback: **99.8%**

Members who left a positive: 3531

Members who left a negative: 3

All positive feedback received: 6587

Member since: Jul 1997
Location: United States

[ID History](#)
[Items for Sale](#)
[Visit my Store](#)
[Learn more About Me](#)

[Contact Member](#)

[Learn about](#) what these numbers mean.

Bid Retractions (Past 6 months): 2

All Feedback Received From Buyers From Sellers Left for Others ① Need Help?

6593 feedback received by dreamlife90 (5 mutually withdrawn) 2404 Page 1 of 30

Comment	From	Date / Time	Item #
Excellent seller, fast emails and shipment. AAA+++	Buyer pharaoh4 (1408 ★)	Feb-25-03 14:35	2157309881
ABSOLUTELY THE PERFECT EBAYER. SENT IMMEDIATELY!!! JUST WONDERFUL THANKS!	Buyer jmxion10 (1) ★	Feb-25-03 12:35	2157309882
Very fast transaction, quick delivery.	Buyer crazyguy (224 ★)	Feb-25-03 12:00	2157309883
An excellent customer, thank you for your business!!	Seller dddaddydee (19 ★)	Feb-25-03 10:25	2157309884
Would not trade again, never shipped my item! Reply by dreamlife90: I emailed you 5 times but no response. Don't sell to this person. Follow-up by katekovespez: I didn't get any emails.	Buyer katekovespez (656 ★)	Feb-25-03 02:35 Feb-29-03 17:00 Feb-29-03 06:40	2157309885
Fast payment! Excellent ...hope do business again AA+++	Seller bestvalue (251 ★) no longer a registered user	Feb-24-03 19:22	2157309888
Thanks again! Always a pleasure.	Buyer littlebitthis (224 ★)	Feb-24-03 18:35	2157309889
Shipping took too long. But offered me refund.	Buyer imintexas (19 ★)	Feb-24-03 17:40	2157309890
Another good deal! Business was a pleasure.	Buyer winthisnow (656 ★)	Feb-24-03 17:00	2157309891
Never shipped the item! Bad Seller! Reply by dreamlife90: Shipment was delayed by UPS. Arrived 2 days later on Feb 26th. Withdrawn: Buyer and seller mutually agreed to withdraw feedback for this item. Learn more.	Buyer funnygirl (68 ★)	Feb-24-03 12:35 Feb-29-03 18:00 Mar-01-03 09:38	2157309892
Good communication and packaging.	Buyer dealseeker (1408 ★)	Feb-24-03 11:22	2157309893
Buy from this guy! He is the best!	Buyer iloveebay (251 ★)	Feb-24-03 09:55	2157309894

FIG. 24

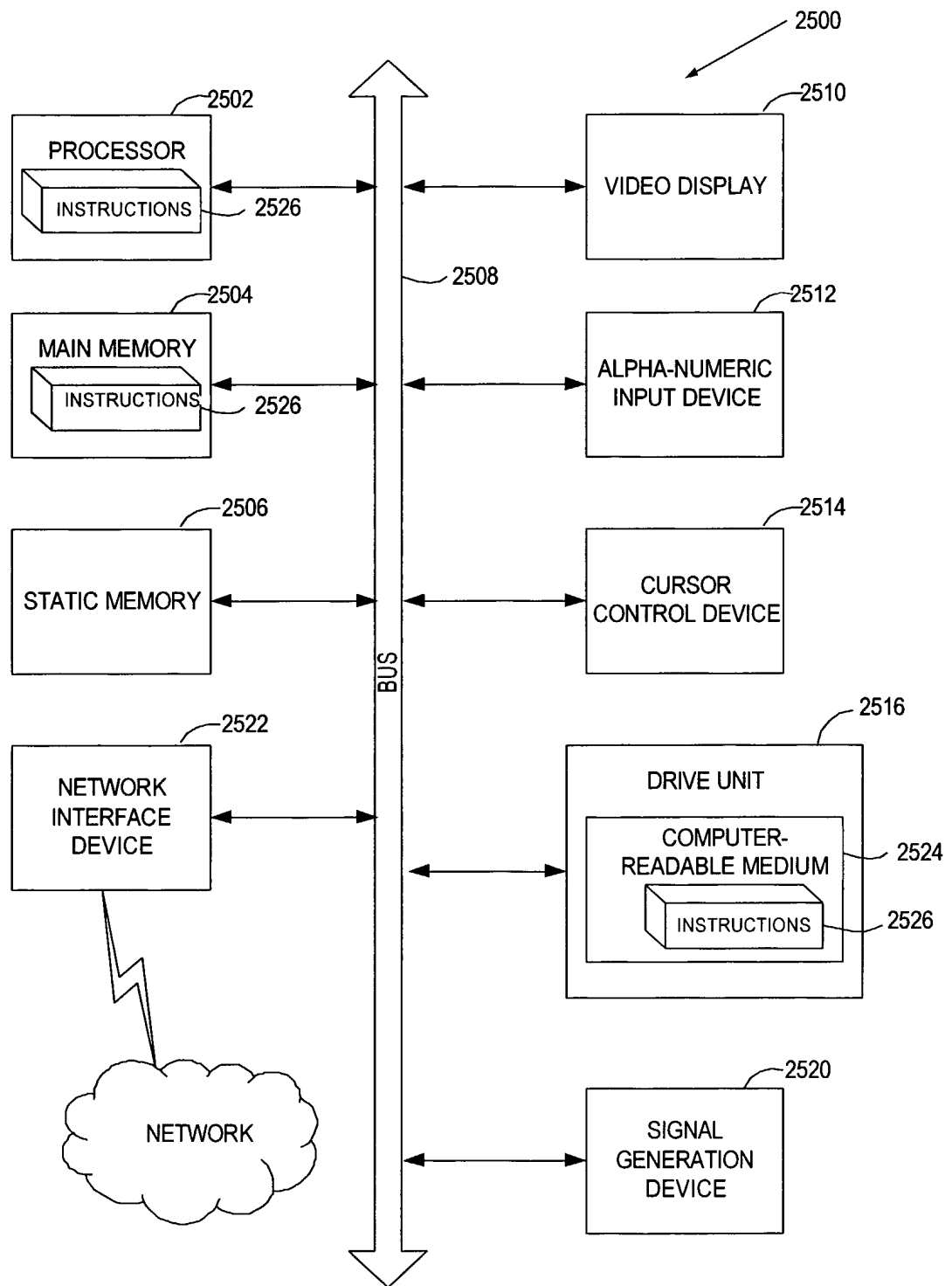


FIG. 25

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US04/38096

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC(7) : G06F 17/60

US CL : 705/10

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

U.S. : 705/10

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)
Please See Continuation Sheet

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	eBay, eBay Feedback Removal Policy, 19 June 2000 [online - Internet Archive WaybackMachine - retrieved on 14 February 2005 - URL: http://pages.ebay.com/help/community/fbremove.html], entire document	1,10
Y	SquareTrade, How SquareTrade's Dispute Resolution Can Help Resolve Feedback Disputes, 12 March 2001, 18 June 2001, and 08 August 2002 [online - Internet Archive WaybackMachine - retrieved on 14 February 2005 - URL: http://www.squaretrade.com/eb/ebay_nf_020801.html] entire document	2-7, 9, 11-17,19, 23, 24
A	US 2002/0078152 A1 (Boone) 20 June 2002 (20.06.2002), Fig. 5, 6a, PAra 0048-0067	1-24
A	WO 01/65338 A2 (Levy et al.) 7 September 2001(07.09.2001) Fig. 4, 5, 13, page 7-15	1-24
A	US 6,810,408 (Bates et al.) 26 October 2004 (26.10.2004), col. 1, lines 11-24	1-24

☐

Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.

☐

See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents:	
"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance	"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
"E" earlier application or patent published on or after the international filing date	"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)	"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art
"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means	"&" document member of the same patent family
"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed	

Date of the actual completion of the international search

11 February 2005 (11.02.2005)

Date of mailing of the international search report

16 MAR 2005

Name and mailing address of the ISA/US

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Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450

Facsimile No. (703) 305-3230

Authorized officer

Tariq R. Hafiz

Telephone No. (703) 308-1113

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US04/38096

Continuation of B. FIELDS SEARCHED Item 3:

PROQUEST, ebay, feedback retraction, or withdrwal and comments, auction site or website and feedback retraction or withdrawal and comments and transaction or email

EAST retract or rescind or cancel or withdrawal near comment or statement or feedback or input or complaint or network or site or website and email; ebay; internet acuton and transaction near feedback or comment

GOOGLE: auction sites and feedback withdrawal

EBSCO: auction sites and feedback

DIALOG: Auction sites and feedback and withdraw and inventors